

**Madison Local School District
Guide for Families to
Early Entrance into Kindergarten**



**Madison Local School District
1956 Red Bird Rd.
Madison, Oh 44057
440-428-2166**

Expect. Believe. Achieve.

Legislation Governing Early Entrance

Beginning with the 2026–2027 school year, HB 114 signed into law on December 19, 2025, mandates that school districts admit children to kindergarten only if the child is five years old by the first day of school.

Pursuant to A.C. 3321.01 and Ohio Department of Education guidelines, a parent may request early admission to kindergarten if the child turns five years of age after the district's kindergarten entrance date (the first day of the academic school year) and before January 1. The local board of education shall determine entrance through a standardized testing process.

Pursuant to A.C. 3321.01 and Ohio Department of Education guidelines, children who will not yet be the proper age for entrance to kindergarten by the first day of January of the school year for which admission is requested shall also be evaluated for possible early admittance if requested by a parent; referred by an educator within the district, a preschool educator who knows the child, a pediatrician or psychologist who knows the child.

Acceleration is the Law (House Bill 79 amended to House Bill 66 – June 30, 2006). Please refer to the State of Ohio's Model Student Acceleration Policy for more information.

Early Entrance to kindergarten is a subject typically addressed through gifted education. It is covered in the State of Ohio's Model Student Acceleration Policy. According to the Ohio Revised Code (3324.01), "gifted" means students who perform or show potential for performing at remarkably high levels of accomplishment when compared to others of their age, experience, or environment and who are identified under Division (A), (B), (C) or (D) of Section 3324.03 of the Revised Code.

Madison Local School District

The 2026-27 school year:

The Madison Local School District considers a child eligible for entrance into kindergarten if they attain the age of five on or before August 26th, 2026. The age of six will be considered compulsory school age.

The Early Entrance to Kindergarten Committee shall review the Early Entrance to kindergarten process annually.

Parent/Guardian requests may be made for children who will not yet be the proper age for entrance to kindergarten by **August 26, 2026**. Children who will turn five before January 1 of the school year may be considered for early admission. Possible early admittance may be considered if requested by a parent; referred by an educator within the district, a preschool educator who knows the child, a pediatrician or psychologist who knows the child, or at the discretion of the principal of the school to which the student may be admitted.

An Early Entrance Application [Early Entrance Request 2026-27](#) needs to be completed by **May 8, 2026**.

***** Students seeking Open Enrollment must request early entrance testing in their home district prior to applying for Open Enrollment. Open enrolled students must meet their home district start date AND the MLSD start date.**

Is Early Entrance Right for Your Child

Is My Child Ready?

Early Entrance to kindergarten is one way to meet a child's needs—but it is based on **developmental readiness**, not just academic ability.

Some children show strong early skills, but may not yet be ready for the social, emotional, and behavioral expectations of kindergarten.

Who Is Early Entrance Designed For?

Early Entrance is intended for children who:

- Are academically ready for kindergarten
- Show advanced thinking and reasoning skills
- Are socially and emotionally mature
- Can manage classroom routines and expectations
- Are developmentally advanced compared to same-age peers

Important Questions for Families

Before requesting Early Entrance, families are encouraged to consider:

- Can my child successfully learn alongside students who are one year older?
- Will kindergarten's academic and social demands cause frustration?
- Do I understand what kindergarten expectations look like today?
- Is this decision based on my child's needs—not childcare needs?
- Is this a **need or a want**?
- What are the long-term impacts (such as progressing through school or starting college at a younger age)?
- Is my child currently in the same grade level as a sibling?
- Would my child be accelerated to the same grade level as (or higher than) a sibling?

Ability vs. Readiness

There is a difference between **ability** and **achievement**.

Some children appear advanced due to early learning opportunities, preschool experiences, or additional support at home. Early Entrance is based on overall readiness—not just exposure to skills.

An Important Reminder

Once a child enters kindergarten early, the decision can be difficult to reverse. For this reason, it is important that families and school staff carefully consider the decision and are fully supportive of the outcome.

Early Entrance works best when a child is ready—academically, socially, and developmentally.

What is expected of students in Kindergarten?
--

Kindergarten, like many other areas of education, has changed considerably over the past several years. Today's kindergarten students are engaged in a rigorous instructional program.

- References to consider
 - The Kindergarten Early Learning Content Standards as well as the subject specific Academic Content Standards for English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies on the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce website
 - <https://childrenandyouth.ohio.gov/for-providers/resources/Early-Learning-Development-Standards>
 - <https://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Learning-in-Ohio>
 - In addition, the Ohio Department of Education' and Workforce's website contains useful information about kindergarten, in particular, the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment for Literacy (KRA-L). There is a family guide on the Early Learning and School Readiness (ELSR) link about the KRA-L, which all kindergarten students will take within the first six weeks of school.
 - <https://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Early-Learning/Kindergarten/Ohios-Kindergarten-readiness-Assessment>
 - <https://education.ohio.gov/getattachment/Topics/Early-Learning/Kindergarten/Ohios-Kindergarten-Readiness-Assessment/Kindergarten-Readiness-Assessment-Revised-Fact-Sheet.pdf.aspx?lang=en-US>

IMPORTANT *During this process, please make sure you proceed with childcare arrangements as a contingency.* If you are selecting a Preschool program, please understand that those programs routinely fill up quickly. Please register your child as you normally would, but let the preschool know that your child is being screened for Early Entrance to kindergarten.

Jen Catanese-Grimes

Director of Student Services

440-428-9320

jen.catanese-grimes@madisonschools.net